

National Register Benefits and Restrictions

UTAH STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

The National Register of Historic Places is the official federal list of properties that are significant in American history, architecture, archaeology, and engineering. This is primarily an honorific designation intended to recognize important buildings, structures, and sites and to encourage their preservation. The following benefits and “restrictions” apply to National Register-listed properties.

Benefits

- **Recognition:** Owners may receive an official certificate of designation and purchase, through the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), an official plaque that can be placed on the building. Both of these are optional. (See SHPO contact information below.)
- **Rehabilitation Tax Credits:** The State Historic Preservation Office administers tax credit programs that can save building owners 20 percent of the cost of rehabilitating their National Register-listed buildings. There is a state income tax credit for residential buildings and a federal income tax credit for “income-producing” buildings (commercial or residential rental). Requirements include submitting a short application form and performing only work that meets appropriate rehab standards. Visit the SHPO website or contact the SHPO directly for details about these programs.
- **Grants:** The very limited grants that might be available are usually channeled through local historic preservation commissions. Contact your local commission or the SHPO for information about what might be available. Keep in mind, however, that in most instances, grants are not readily available, or if they are the grant amounts are quite small (usually less than \$5,000).
- **Loans:** The Utah Heritage Foundation, a statewide non-profit organization, administers loan programs for historic buildings. Contact them for details: www.utahheritagefoundation.com or (801) 533-0858.
- **Building Code Leniency:** Officially designated historic buildings may not have to comply with all building code requirements. Chapter 34 of both the *Uniform Building Code* and the *International Building Code* and chapters 4-6 of the *Uniform Code for Building Conservation* provide direction for local building officials in accommodating some of the non-code-complying features of older buildings.
- **Local Zoning Variance:** Most communities have provisions that allow designated historic buildings to be used for purposes other than what the zone otherwise requires (e.g. a bed-and-breakfast in a historic home in a residential neighborhood). The choice of alternative uses is usually limited in order to protect the neighbors from radically incompatible uses, but several reasonable options are allowed.
- **Rehabilitation Advice:** The SHPO has an experienced staff of architects and preservation specialists who can answer questions about historic building restoration: basic dos and don'ts, rehab techniques, products, qualified contractors, and so forth. Much of this information is available on the SHPO website: history.utah.gov.

Restrictions

Contrary to some rumors, there are **no restrictions** associated with National Register listing. Owners do not have to open their buildings to the public, nor do they need anyone's approval for anything they do to their buildings. National Register listing does not affect the property taxes or how the buildings may be used.

Local preservation ordinances, where present, may have some implication for buildings listed on **local** registers, but the local register process is entirely separate from the National Register process. Most cities in Utah do not impose restrictions on historic building owners; those that do usually limit their control to the exterior. Contact your local planning department to see what, if any, rules may apply to local historic register designation.

Additional information

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